

Foreign-Affairs Outlook on Capitol Hill

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 11 — The Republicans' election victory in the Senate could usher in a new phase in Congressional relations with the White House in which greater freedom of action in foreign and defense policy is restored to the executive branch, several Senators and staff aides said today.

Just a week has passed since the Republicans won control of the Senate, 53 seats to 47, and the leaders of the new Republican majority have just started working on an agenda for next year. However, both Republican and Democratic members say that the new Senate will be more supportive of increases in military spending and more skeptical of arms negotiations with the Soviet Union.

They said that the most important shift that could occur would be giving the executive branch greater flexibility in conducting diplomacy and using military force abroad. "There will certainly be more support for giving the White House more flexibility on national-security matters," said Senator John Tower, who is scheduled to take over the Armed Services Committee in January.

Few Liberals Survived Election

"If Reagan wants to concentrate power in the White House, I think he will get what he wants," said Senator Gary Hart, Democrat of Colorado, one of the few liberals who survived last week's election. "We have lost a whole generation of people in the Senate who are experienced in foreign affairs, and the new people have little memory of Vietnam or Watergate."

Senators and staff aides said that after 12 years in which Congress legislated restrictions on Presidential authority for

going to war, selling arms and ordering intelligence operations, the pendulum of Congressional control had already begun to swing back.

Senate aides said the defeat of Democratic Senators Frank Church of Idaho, George McGovern of South Dakota and John C. Culver of Iowa, meant that some of the most vocal and articulate voices for an expanded Congressional role in foreign policy would be gone. Mr. Church, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, had been a particularly strong force behind legislation restricting Presidential war powers and cutting back White House prerogatives in national emergencies.

Together with other liberal Democrats and Republicans, the three Senators had also brought about adoption of restrictions on foreign aid and military cooperation with pro-Western countries that were judged to have violated human rights, such as Chile and Argentina.

Some of the leaders of the new Republican majority in the Senate, including Senators Tower and Barry Goldwater of Arizona, the prospective chairman of the Intelligence Committee, are well-known critics of many of the controls placed on Presidential authority during the 1970's, including the 1973 War Powers Act and the 1976 Arms Control Export Act.

Mr. Goldwater said in an interview that he also favored the removal of restrictions on intelligence operations "that had hampered the legitimate functions of the C.I.A."

Staff aides close to Charles H. Percy of Illinois, the new chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said it was too soon to say whether he would support the widespread repeal of Congressional controls. But committee aides said that Mr. Percy,

considered a moderate in foreign policy, was likely to come under heavy pressure from Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, and other conservatives on the committee.

Mr. Tower said it was unlikely that the War Powers Act would be repealed because it had become a symbol of Congressional participation in national security issues. The act, which was largely drafted by Senator Jacob K. Javits, the New York Republican who was defeated last week, requires the President to consult with Congress after ordering troops into combat.

Repeal of Act Believed Unlikely

A senior Republican aide in the Senate also said it was unlikely that the Reagan administration would seek repeal of the act for fear of appearing too eager to go to war.

At the same time, several foreign policy restrictions could be loosened or dropped altogether, Senate aides said. Several senators are said to favor modification of the 1978 Nuclear Nonproliferation Act so that the White House would have greater flexibility in exports of nuclear materials.

There is also said to be growing support for ending restrictions on sales of military equipment to countries that have generally supported American diplomacy but that have been out of favor because of human-rights issues or other problems. These countries were said to include Somalia, Morocco, Turkey and Pakistan.

Republican aides said there was strong sentiment on both the Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee in favor of abolishing the 1976 action requiring an annual report from the executive branch on the impact of new weapons development and deployment decisions on arms-control negotiations.

Senate officials said that the removal of existing foreign-policy restrictions would depend, in the end, on whether the Democratic majority in the House was willing to concur with the Senate. The chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Clement J. Zablocki of Wisconsin, supported earlier efforts to guarantee Congressional participation in foreign-policy issues, but aides said he had recently backed attempts by the Carter White House to get somewhat more autonomy in foreign aid and other areas.

On military issues, Congressional staff members said they expected close cooperation between the Armed Services Committees of the House and the Senate. The House committee, headed by Melvin Price, Democrat of Illinois, has supported increases in military spending in recent years and is expected to continue doing so.